

25th BOSTON TURKISH FILM & MUSIC FESTIVAL PRESENTS

KENAN OKTAY & FRIENDS

Kenan Oktay, tenor

Heather V. Gager, soprano

Emin İsmayilov, tenor

Julian Drummond, pianist

Friday, 22 May 2026 | 7:00 p.m.

Longy School of Music

Zabriskie House, Pickman Concert Hall

PROGRAM

Lüküs Hayat (Luxurious Life)
from the operetta *Lüküs Hayat*

Cemal Reşit Rey (1904 - 1985)
Ekrem Reşit Rey (1900 - 1959)¹

Deposuit Potentes (He Has Cast Down the Mighty)
from *Magnificat*, BWV 243

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685 - 1750)

Una furtiva lagrima (A Furtive Tear)
from the opera *L'elisir d'amore*

Gaetano Donizetti (1797 - 1848)
Felice Romani (1788 - 1865)

Mandoline (Mandolin)
from *Cinq Mélodies "de Venise"*, Op. 58

Gabriel Fauré (1845 - 1924)
Paul Verlaine (1844 - 1896)

An die Musik (To Music)
D. 547

Franz Schubert (1797 - 1828)
Franz von Schober (1796 - 1882)

Средь шумного бала (Amid the Din of the Ball)
from *Six Romances*, Op. 38, No. 3

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840 - 1893)
A.K. Tolstoy (1817 - 1875)

Moments musicaux (Musical Moments)
Op. 16, No. 3

Sergei Rachmaninoff (1873 - 1943)

A New Life
from the musical *Jekyll & Hyde*

Frank Wildhorn (b. 1958)
Leslie Bricusse (1931 - 2021)

"Sana Muhtacım" Dedi... (She Said, "I Need You"...)
from the musical *Gözlerimi Kaparım Vazifemi Yaparım*
(I Close My Eyes and Do My Duty)

Selim Atakan (b. 1951)
Haldun Taner (1915 - 1986)

Intermission

Havada Bulut Yok (No Cloud in the Sky)	Turkish Folk Song (Anonymous)
La bruja (The Witch)	Mexican Folk Song (Anonymous) ²
Za jedan časak radosti (For One Moment of Joy)	Croatian Folk Song (Anonymous)
Yalqızam, yalqız (I Am Alone, Alone)	Tofiq Quliyev (1917 - 2000) Rəsul Rza (1910 - 1981)
Spring Intermezzo from <i>Four Seasonal Sketches</i>	Betty Jackson King (1928 - 1994)
Tonight from the musical <i>West Side Story</i>	Leonard Bernstein (1918 - 1990) Stephen Sondheim (1930 - 2021)
Nature Boy (intro) <i>Attacca:</i>	eden ahbez (1908 - 1995) ³ arr. Kurt Elling (b. 1967) & Laurence Hobgood (b. 1959)
Buselik Makamına (Into the Buselik Maqam)	Mazhar Fuat Özkan (MFÖ) Mazhar Alanson (b. 1950), music & lyrics Fuat Güner (b. 1948) Özkan Uğur (1953 - 2023)

¹The libretto of *Lüküs Hayat* is officially credited to Ekrem Reşit Rey. However, historical accounts and witness testimony suggest that some or all of the lyrics may have been written by Nâzım Hikmet (1902 - 1963), one of Türkiye's greatest poets and a towering figure of 20th-century world literature. Jailed a total of seventeen years for his political beliefs, his imprisonment became an international cause championed by Pablo Picasso, Jean-Paul Sartre, Paul Robeson, Pablo Neruda, and many others. Unable to sign his name publicly, he could not be credited at the time.

²Son jarocho is a traditional folk music style from the state of Veracruz, Mexico, born from the fusion of Spanish, indigenous, and African musical traditions. "La Bruja" is a son jarocho standard, as is the internationally renowned "La Bamba."

³eden ahbez, born George Alexander Aberle in Brooklyn, deliberately spelled his name in lowercase, believing that only God and Infinity deserved to begin with a capital letter. He lived as a mystic and wanderer in white robes and sandals, sleeping outdoors in the California mountains and eating only raw fruits and vegetables. He wrote "Nature Boy" while living this way, and Nat King Cole's 1948 recording became one of the most covered songs in the history of popular music.

PERFORMERS

Kenan Oktay is a Turkish-American-Croatian tenor pursuing an M.M. in Voice at Longy School of Music, where he studies with Anne Azéma. He is a graduate of Tufts University with a B.A. in International Relations, *summa cum laude*. In 2022 he began his vocal journey with the Tufts Amalgamates a cappella group and in 2023 began studying voice with Bülent Güneralp. In 2024 he performed at Sorbonne Nouvelle in Paris and sang opera, oratorio, art song, and musical theatre at the Lanzarote Opera Festival in Spain. With Tufts Opera Ensemble, he has performed as Tamino, Nemorino, and Don Ramiro in scenes programs and as the Moon in the full production of *The Enchanted Pig* by Jonathan Dove. In 2025 KLCC (NPR) featured his vocal journey, and Bülent Güneralp appointed him his first associate teacher. He will appear as James Wilson in Greater Worcester Opera's upcoming production of *1776*. – kenanoktay.com

Heather V. Gager is a Mexican-American soprano pursuing an M.M. in Voice at Longy School of Music, where she studies with Sandra Piques Eddy. She is an endowed Jo Frances Meyer Scholar. This season, she performs as Due Cretani in Longy's spring opera, *Idomeneo* by Mozart, and as Frida Kahlo and Elena Kagan in the spring musical, *Well-Behaved Women* by Carmel Dean. She graduated *cum laude* from Wellesley College with a B.A. in Anthropology, where she served as president and music director of The Wellesley Widows a cappella group and performed as a soloist in *Le Printemps* by Claude Debussy with the College Chamber Singers under Dr. Lisa Graham.

Emin İsmayilov is an Azerbaijani tenor pursuing a G.P.D. in Voice at Longy School of Music, where he studies with Cailin Marcel Manson. He began his musical studies as a guitarist at age 13 before discovering his passion for classical voice. After initial studies at Azerbaijan State Economic University, he earned his B.M. at Baku Music Academy, where he performed leading roles in operas by Giuseppe Verdi and Fikrat Amirov. As an Invited Soloist with the Azerbaijan State Academic Opera and Ballet Theatre, he appeared in major productions before performing at the Immling International Opera Festival, where he participated in *Nabucco*, *Aida*, and *Roméo et Juliette*.

Julian Drummond is a pianist and Javanese gamelan musician from Cambridge, Massachusetts. He has performed extensively across the Northeast from Surry, Maine to New York as a collaborator and soloist, as well with some of the renowned Javanese musicians alive today including Darsono Hadiraharjo, Peni Candrarini, Wakidi Dwidjomartono, and I.M. Harjito. Julian's piano teachers have included Armine Donato, Konstantinos Papadakis, Jonathan Bass, and Gilles Vonsattel.